Low literacy and high papulation growth rate in Himachal Pradesh

1735. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Himachal Pradesh suffers from low literacy, high population growth rate;

(b) whether Government of Himachal Pradesh have apprised of these problems to the Central Government; and

(c) if so, what is the reaction of the Central Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) No, Sir. The literacy rate in Himachal Pradesh is infact higher than the national average.

Similarly, population growth rate is lower than the national average.

(b) Himachal Pradesh Government has indicated to achieve the 100 per cent literacy level durng the 8th Plan.

(c) Does not arise.

Request of Rajasthan for inclusion in Special Category Status States

1736. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether with a view to fulfil the major plan objective of reducing regional disparities, Government have taken any decision on the request of Rajasthan State for its inclusion in the special category States for funding of plan assistance;

(b) whether it is a fact that per capita outlay for the Seventh Plan or the per capita development expenditure for Rajasthan was far below as compared to any of the seven special category States during Seventh Plan; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to raise loan grant pattern for Central assistance from 70:30 ratio to 90 percent and grant 10 per cent loan to enable Government of Rajasthan to bring people at par with their brothers in other parts of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) The request of Rajasthan State to extend pattern of Central Assistance as available to Special Category States is not favoured, because the State does not have handicaps faced by these States which are hilly and border States and like them has not come out of a small Union Territory/ district having a weak resource base.

(b) Yes, Sir. The per capita outlay and expenditure of Rajasthan for the Seventh Plan was much lower compared to the seven Special Category States.

(c) The request of Rajasthan State to extend pattern of Central assistance of 90 per cent grant and 10 per cent loan as available to Special Category States could not be considered because Rajasthan has a developed fiscal system and possesses potential to raise resources for its development nor it is predominantly hilly area like the seven Special Category States. The formula for distribution of Central assistance to the States is adequately weighted in favour of backward States including Rajasthan, considering weights of population (60 per cent), per capita income (25 per cent) criteria, and Special Problems (7.5 per cent).